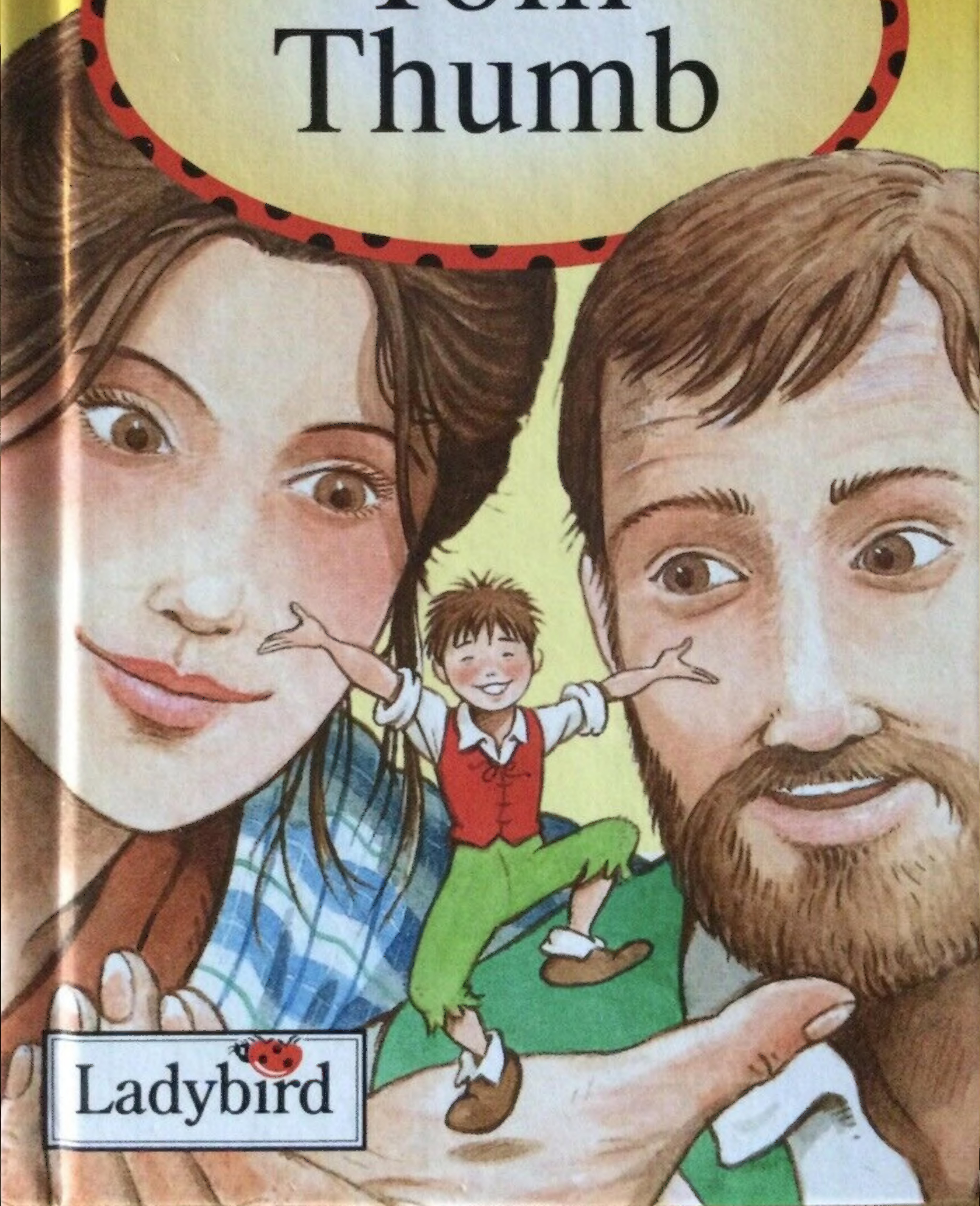
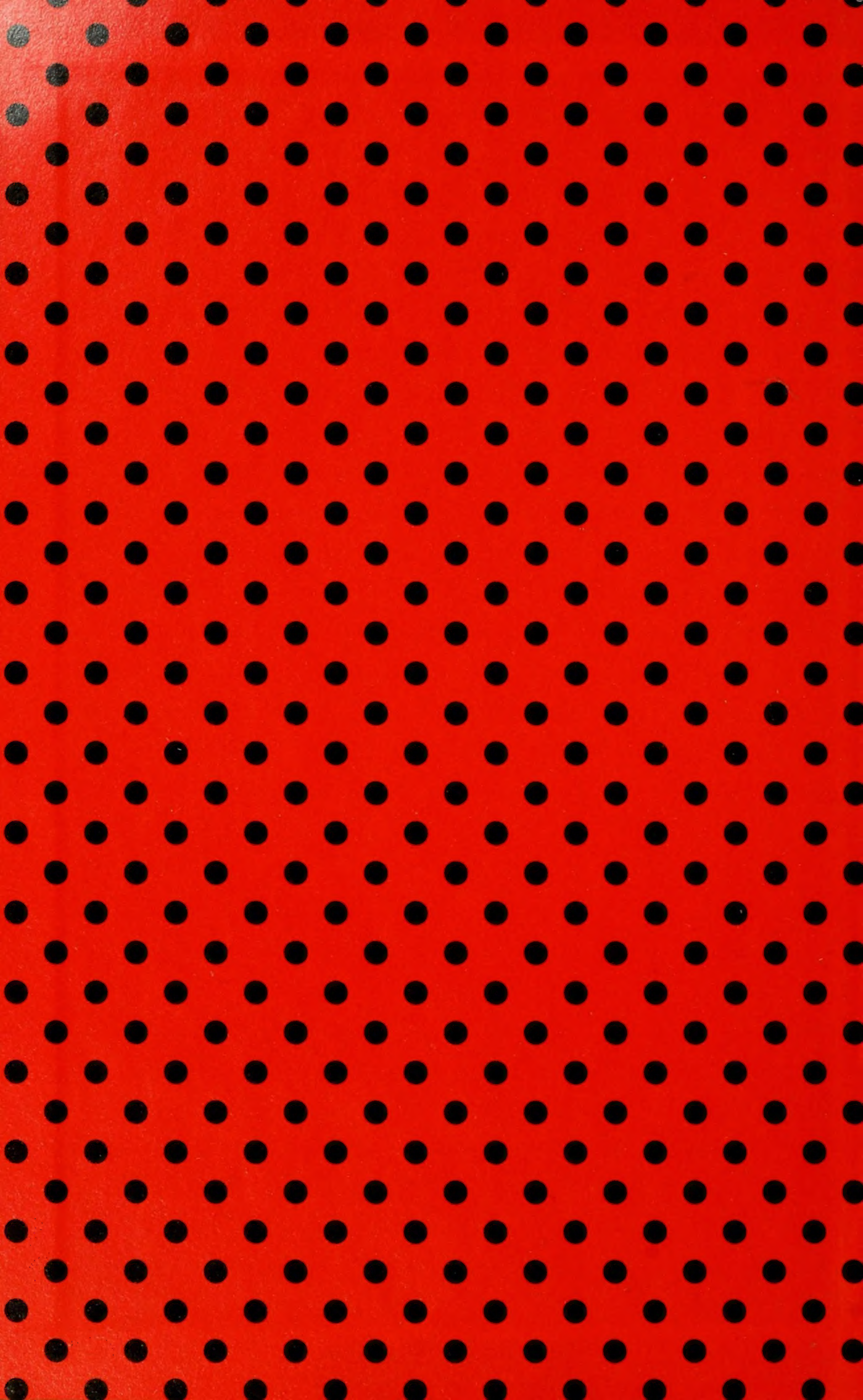


FAVOURITE TALES

Tom Thumb



Ladybird





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This Ladybird retelling
by
Audrey Daly

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FAVOURITE TALES

Tom Thumb

illustrated
by
PETER STEVENSON



based on a story by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

There was once a woodsman and his wife who were very sad because they had no children.

“If only we had a child to love,” said the wife, “I wouldn’t mind if he were as small as my thumb!”

Time passed and at last they had a son, which made them both very happy.

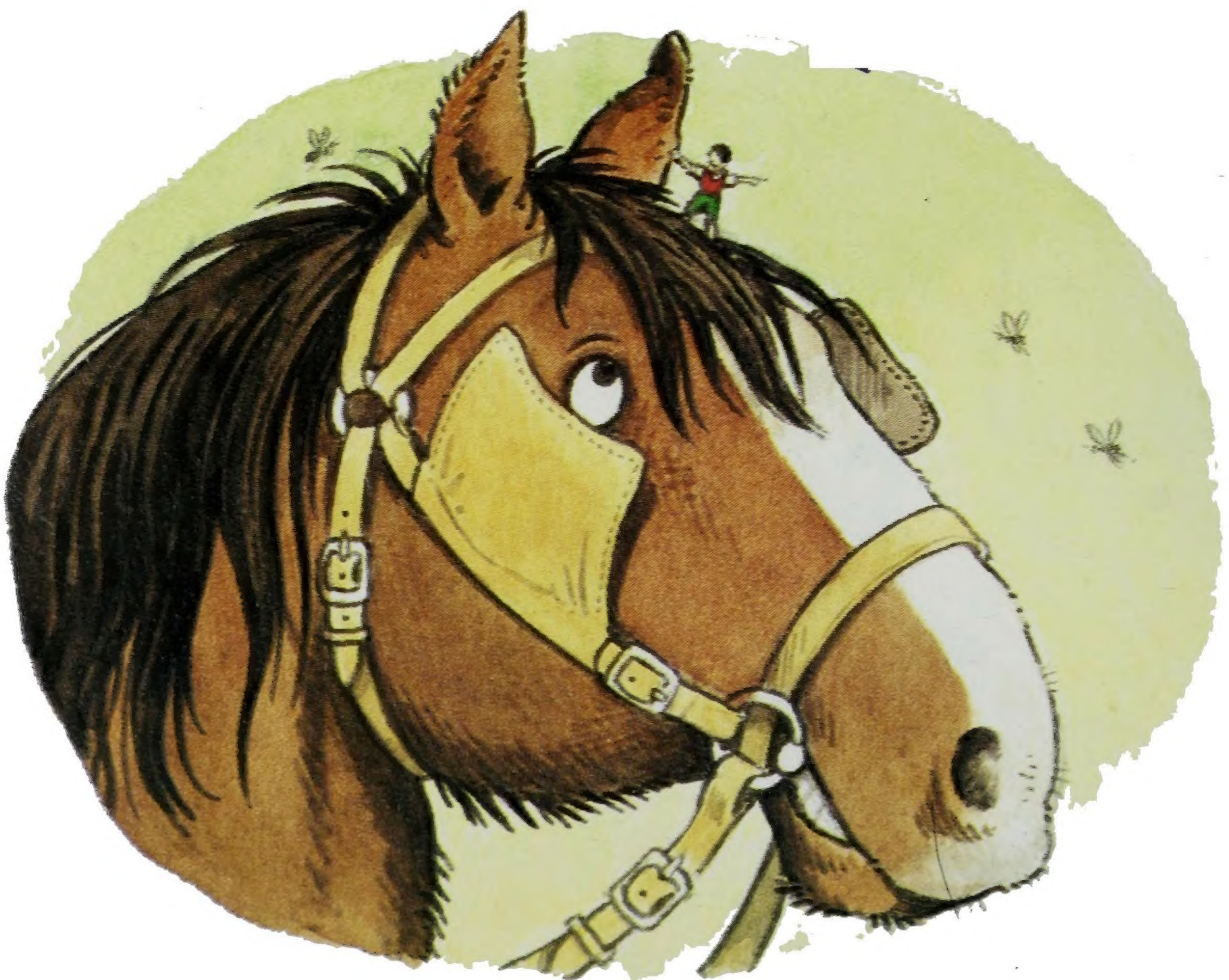
Strangely enough, the boy never grew any bigger than a man’s thumb, and so they called him “Tom Thumb”.





One day, as Tom's father set off for work, he sighed, "If only Tom were bigger, he could drive the cart into the forest for me."

Tom looked at his mother. "I can do it anyway!" he said. "If you will harness the horse, Mother, I'll show you how." Tom's mother did as he asked.





A moment later, off went the cart
with Tom tucked in the horse's ear.

When Tom said, "Turn left," the
horse turned left. When Tom said,
"Turn right," the horse turned right.

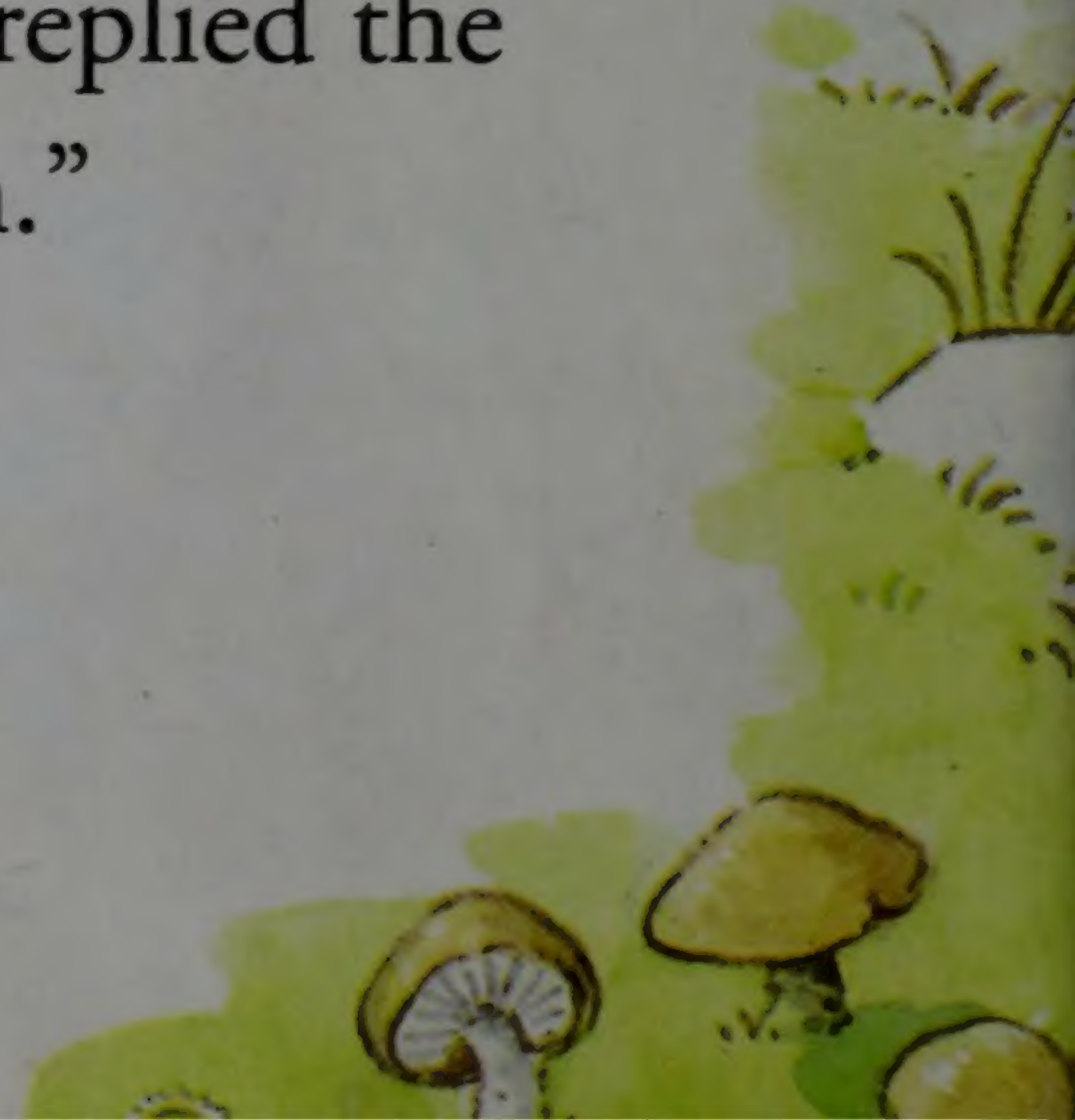


Two men strolling through the forest saw Tom's cart. Surprised to see this curious sight, they decided to follow.

The cart stopped and Tom's father appeared. The two men watched as Tom's father took his tiny son out of the horse's ear.

The men were amazed. "What a clever little fellow he is," one of them said. "Will you sell him to us?"

"I would never sell him," replied the woodsman. "He is my son."





But Tom whispered, "Sell me to them, Father. It will be an adventure! And I'll be back soon."

Reluctantly, the woodsman agreed. He sold Tom for thirty gold pieces.

The two men set off. One of them slipped Tom into his pocket. "We can put Tom on show in the towns," he declared. "He will make us rich!"





Towards evening, Tom called out,
“Please put me down so that I can
stretch my legs.”

When the men put him down,
Tom ran straight off and hid. The
men looked everywhere, but he
had disappeared.



Tom looked for somewhere safe to sleep. He soon found an empty snail shell and curled up inside it. Just as he was falling asleep, he heard voices nearby.

Two thieves were talking. “We’ll sneak into the parson’s house and steal his money!” said one.

“Take me with you,” said Tom in a loud voice. “I can help you!”

The men were puzzled. They could hear a voice, but they couldn’t see anyone. They were astonished when they found the tiny boy.





“I can get in through a crack in the window,” said Tom, “and I can throw the money down to you.”

The men agreed to take Tom with them and see what he could do.

When they got to the parson’s house, Tom did as he had said. Then, standing on the window ledge, he shouted, “Do you want *all* the money that’s here?”

“Sssh!” said the thieves, frightened. “You’ll wake the whole house!”





But Tom shouted even louder.
“HOW MUCH MONEY
SHOULD I THROW DOWN?”

The noise woke the cook, who
was sleeping in the next room.

While the cook got up to look around, Tom ran off to the barn. There he settled down to sleep in the hay.



By the time the cook got downstairs, the thieves had run away and there was no sign of Tom at all.



Stop eating!



Next morning the cook went to milk and feed the cow. She picked up the very bundle of hay that Tom was sleeping in.

Tom woke up to find himself being tossed up and down in the cow's mouth. He landed in the cow's stomach with all the hay.

"Stop eating!" yelled Tom. "I'm getting smothered!"

The cook was so startled to hear a voice coming from the cow's mouth that she ran to the parson.

"Help!" she cried.

"The cow's talking!"





“Don’t be silly,” said the parson.
“Cows don’t talk.”

Just then Tom shouted again – the parson was astonished.

As soon as he could, Tom crawled out of the cow’s stomach and slipped away. No one saw him go.

But Tom’s troubles were far from over. A hungry wolf was passing by and saw Tom in the farmyard.



“This will make a tasty little snack,” thought the wolf, and he swallowed Tom in one gulp.





Clever Tom quickly thought of a plan. “Wolf,” he called, “if you are still hungry, I know where there is lots of food.” And he told the wolf how to get to his very own house, which was not far away.

When they got there, Tom said, “Just crawl through the drain and you’ll be in the kitchen, where there is always plenty to eat.”

The drain was quite small, but the wolf squeezed and pushed and *just* managed to get through.





In the kitchen, the wolf ate so much that when he tried to crawl back through the drain, he was much too fat!

Then Tom began to shout and sing at the top of his voice.



His parents came to the kitchen door to see what all the noise was about.

“It’s a wolf!” said Tom’s father.
“Where’s my axe?”

“Wait, Father!” shouted Tom.
“It’s me! I’m here, inside the wolf’s stomach!”

“Tom!” cried his father. “Don’t worry, we’ll save you!”

Tom’s father picked up his axe and hit the wolf over the head. Then, very carefully, he cut a little hole in the wolf’s stomach.

Out jumped Tom, safe and sound. “I told you I’d be back soon, Father!” he laughed.

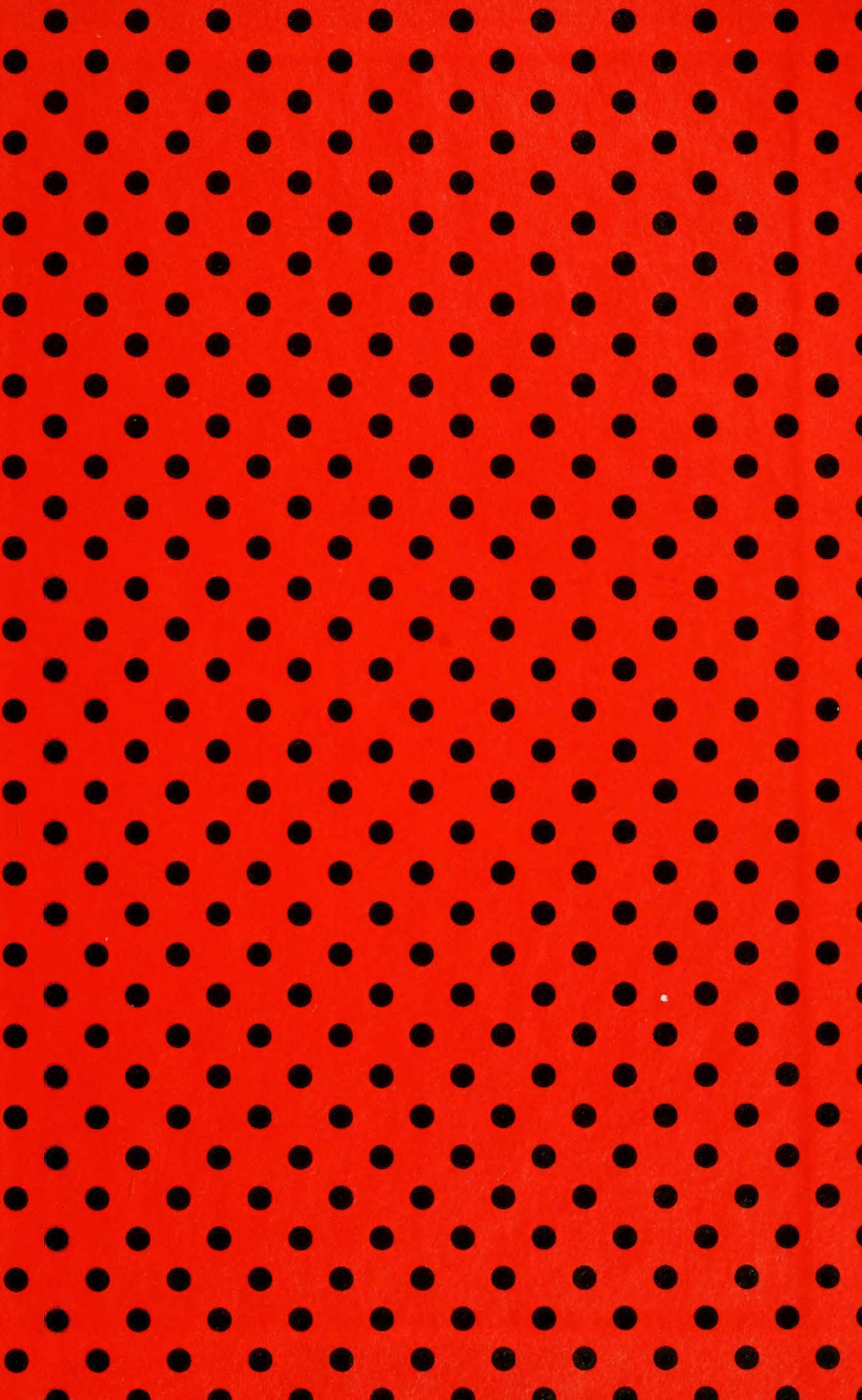


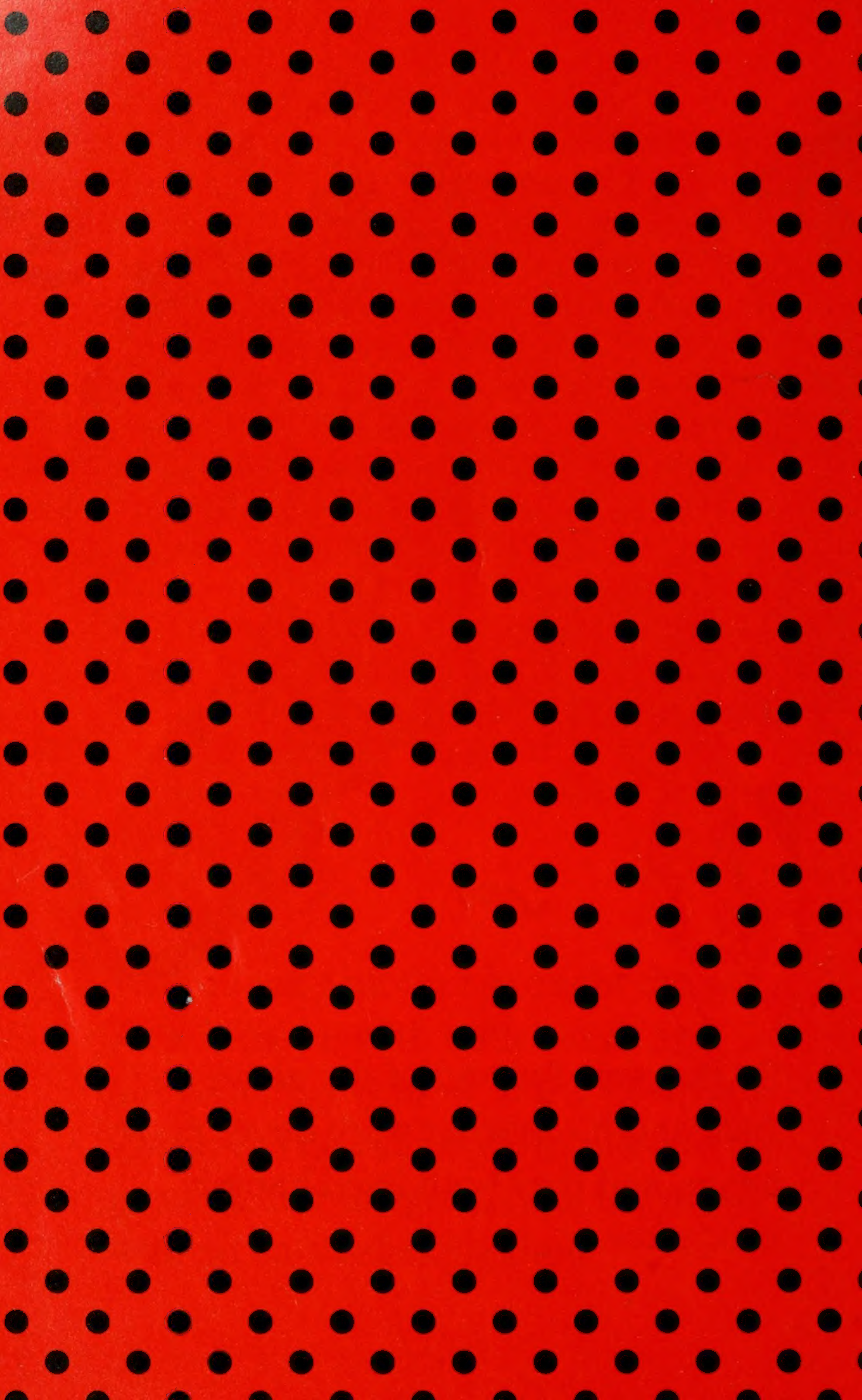
Tom’s parents were overjoyed to see him.

“We’ll never part with you again,” said his father, “not for all the money in the world.”



“And I will never leave home again,”
promised Tom. “I’ve had enough
adventure to last a lifetime!”





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